Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1, 5, 11-13, 19, 21-22, 24-27, 33-43 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 13, and 27 being the independent claims.

New claims 41-43 are sought to be added.

These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested. Support for the changes to the amended claims and for the new claims can be found, for example, at paragraphs [0097-0107] of the specification and FIG. 10 of the drawings.

Based on the above amendment and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 5, 13, 19, 27, 33-40 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,734,879 to Hasha et al. ("Hasha") and Pub. No. US 2002/0022991to Sharood et al. ("Sharood").

The Examiner has also rejected claims 1, 5, 11-13, 19, 21-22, 24-27, and 33-40 under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pub. No. US 2003/0103088 to Dresti et al. ("Dresti") and U.S. Patent No. 6,198,479 to Humpleman et al. ("Humpleman").

For the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejections.

Applicants' invention is directed to a graphic user interface (GUI) for simplifying the control of multiple consumer electronic devices to perform a selected activity, such as watching a movie on a DVD or listening to a song on a CD.

In response to the user's selection, the GUI displays a screen containing a first set of control objects for controlling a device consistent with the user's selection (such as a television or a stereo). Displayed concurrently on the screen with such control objects is a second set of control objects representing a number of affiliated devices that are capable of providing an input to said selected system component and that are associated with the selected activity (such as a DVD player or a CD player).

Not shown on the GUI may be one or more affiliated devices that are associated with the selected activity (such as an amplifier), but which the user configures as being hidden from view on the GUI. While such "hidden devices" are required for performing the selected activity, they normally operate invisibly to the user and therefore the control object representing such hidden devices need not be displayed on the GUI. Control of such hidden devices is accomplished via proxy controls applicable to displayed affiliated devices (e.g., volume is adjusted by "controlling" the displayed television, but the actual volume commands are directed to the hidden amplifier). The ability to configure certain devices as hidden devices promotes simplicity of the GUI by avoiding confusing and/or distracting clutter of control objects on the GUI.

In particular, independent claim 1 of the Application is directed to a GUI for managing a plurality of system components within a controlled environment to perform a selected activity, comprising:

> a first set of control objects for selecting a system component within the controlled environment, wherein activation of a control

object from said first set denotes said selected system component and populates the user interface with control options, wherein each control option is associated with a sequence of commands that, when executed, sends instructions to control the operations or functions of said selected system component in accordance with the selected activity;

a second set of control objects displayed concurrently with said control options associated with said selected system component, wherein each control object within said second set of control objects is configured for viewing on the user interface and represents an affiliate system component associated with the selected activity and capable of providing an input to said selected system component, wherein activation of a control object from said second set populates the user interface with control options for an affiliate system component associated with the activated control object from the second set, wherein each control option for said affiliate system component is associated with a sequence of commands that, when executed, sends instructions to control the operations or functions of said affiliate system component in accordance with the selected activity, and wherein said control options for said affiliate system component are displayed concurrently with said second set of control objects on the user interface; and

a third set of control objects representing one or more affiliate system components capable of providing an input to said selected system component and associated with performing the selected activity, but configured to be hidden from display on the user interface.

Independent claim 13 of the Application is directed to a method of managing a plurality of system components within a controlled environment for performing a selected activity, comprising:

presenting, on a user interface, a first set of control objects, each object being associated with one or more system components within the controlled environment;

selecting a system component in response to receiving an activation signal associated with a control object from said first set;

populating said user interface with control options for the selected system component;

associating each control option with a sequence of executable commands that sends instructions to control the operations or functions of the selected system component in accordance with the selected activity;

presenting, on said user interface concurrently with said control options associated with said selected system component, a second set of

control objects, wherein each control object within said second set of control objects represents an affiliate system component associated with the selected activity and capable of providing an input to the selected system component and has been configured for viewing on said user interface;

presenting, on said user interface concurrently with said second set of control objects, control options for an affiliate system component in response to activating a control object from said second set;

hiding from display on the user interface one or more affiliate system components that are associated with performing the selected activity but are configured not to be displayed; and

associating each control option for each affiliate system component configured for viewing on the user interface with a sequence of executable commands that sends instructions to control the operations or functions of said affiliate system component configured for viewing on the user interface in accordance with the selected activity.

Independent Claim 27 is direct to a computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having computer readable program code means embedded in said medium for causing a computer to manage a plurality of system components within a controlled environment to perform a selected activity, comprising:

first computer readable program code means for presenting, on a user interface, a first set of control objects, each object being associated with one or more system components within the controlled environment;

second computer readable program code means for selecting a system component in response to receiving an activation signal associated with a control object from said first set;

third computer readable program code means for populating said user interface with control options for the selected system component;

fourth computer readable program code means for associating each control option with a sequence of executable commands that sends instructions to control the operations or functions of the selected system component in accordance with the selected activity;

fifth computer readable program code means for presenting, on said user interface concurrently with said control options associated with the selected system component, a second set of control objects, wherein each control object within said second set of control objects is configurable for viewing on said user interface and represents an affiliate system component associated with the selected activity and capable of providing an input to the selected system component;

sixth computer readable program code means for presenting, on said user interface concurrently with said second set of control objects, control options for an affiliate system component in response to activating a control object from said second set;

seventh computer readable program code means for associating each control option for said affiliate system component with a sequence of executable commands that sends instructions to control the operations or functions of said affiliate system component in accordance with the selected activity; and

eighth computer readable program code for hiding from display on the user interface one or more affiliate system components that are associated with performing the selected activity but are configured not to be displayed.

Both the Hasha-Sharood and Dresti-Humpleman Combinations Proposed by the Examiner Fail to Render Applicants' Invention Unpatentable as Being Obvious

Even assuming for present purposes the propriety of combining Hasha and Sharood or combining Dresti and Humpleman in the manner proposed by the Examiner, each of these combination fails to teach or suggest the Applicants' invention. Among other things, each of these combinations fails to teach or suggest that the control objects representing affiliate system components associated with a selected activity can be configured to be hidden from view on the GUI, as required independent claims 1, 13, and 27. Specifically, the Hasha-Sharood and the Dresti-Humpleman combinations are devoid of disclosure relating to "a third set of control objects representing one or more affiliate system components capable of providing an input to said selected system component and associated with performing the selected activity, but configured to be hidden from display on the user interface" as required by claim 1, or the step of "hiding from display on the user interface one or more affiliate system components that are associated with performing the selected activity but are configured not to be displayed" as required by claim 13, or "computer readable program code for hiding from display on

the user interface one or more affiliate system components that are associated with performing the selected activity but are configured not to be displayed" as required by claim 27.

In reaching his conclusion that Applicants' claimed invention is unpatentable as being obvious in view of the proposed combinations of the cited references, the Examiner states that such references show that it was known in the art that users may choose which affiliate system components to associate with a selected activity, whereupon such "associated affiliated system components would consequently be displayed when the configured activity is selected." Irrespective of whether that statement is correct or not, it misses the point of Applicants' primary argument in support of patentability. None of the cited references teach or suggest the ability of the user to configure an associated affiliated system component such that its representative control object is hidden from view on the GUI (which may be controlled though proxy control options constructively affiliated with displayed control objects).

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that neither the proposed combination of Hasha and Sharood nor the proposed combination of the Dresti and Humpleman render independent claims 1, 13 and 27 unpatentable under Section 103(a).

Conclusion

Because the Hasha-Sharood combination proposed by the Examiner does not teach or suggest each and every feature of independent claims 1, 13 and 27, as explained above, these claims cannot be rendered unpatentable for obviousness by that combination. Similarly, because the Dresti-Humpleman combination proposed by the Examiner does not teach or suggest each and every feature of independent claims 1, 13

and 27, as explained above, these claims also cannot be rendered unpatentable for obviousness by that combination.

The claims that depend from independent claims 1, 13, and 27, are likewise not rendered unpatentable by the Hasha-Sharood combination or the Dresti-Humpleman combination for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend and further in view of their own respective features.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejection of pending claims 1, 5, 11-13, 19, 21-22, 24-27, 33-43 be reconsidered and withdrawn and allowed to issue.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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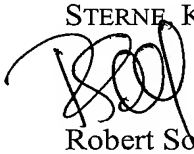

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